

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6460
INFO 6/AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

UUMWAAM/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 867
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SF, PINT
SUBJECT: KRUGER TO RELEASE 81 DETAINEES

REF: PRETORIA 5500, PRETORIA 5791 (NOTAL),

1. ON DECEMBER 17, JUSTICE MINISTER KRUGER ANNOUNCED THAT
PENDING COMPLETION OF "NECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS",
81 DETAINEES WOULD BE RELEASED. HE SAID DECISION WAS MADE
"TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PREVAILING CIRCUMSTANCES", BUT HAD
GIVEN NO TIME FRAME. ON DECEMBER 20, MINISTER OF JUSTICE
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SPOKESMAN SAID RELEASE WOULD BE MADE BY CHRISTMAS. SPOKESMAN
STATED THAT AMONG THOSE TO BE RELEASED WERE DR. FATIMA MEER
AND SEVERAL ARGUS GROUP REPORTERS. HOWEVER, HE SPECIFICALLY
EXCLUDED WINNIE MANDELA, DR. NTHATO MOTLANA, AND DR. AARON
MATLHARE, ALL BLACK PARENTS' ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, AND
RAND DAILY MAIL PHOTOGRAPHER PETER MAGUBANE.

2. APPARENTLY SOME HAVE ALREADY BEEN ALLOWED TO LEAVE DETENTION AS MORNING PRESS DECEMBER 21 CARRIED ARTICLE ON RELEASE OF 25 PERSONS IN EASTERN CAPE. THOSE RELEASED INCLUDED BARNEY PITYANA, FORMER SASO PRESIDENT, BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS ACTIVIST AND ASSOCIATE OF STEVE BIKO. AMONG THOSE NOT RELEASED IN EASTERN CAPE WERE GIBSON KENTE, PLAYWRIGHT (CAPE TOWN 1232); NXOLISI MVOVO, BPC VICE-PRESIDENT AND ORGANISER OF BLACK COMMUNITY PROGRAM IN KING WILLIAMS TOWN, ALONG WITH BIKO; AND DR. MAMPHELE RAMPHELE, DIRECTOR OF BLACK COMMUNITY PROJECT AND ONE OF TWO DOCTORS DETAINED AFTER PRIVATE POSTMORTEM PERFORMED ON MAPETLA MOHAPI, WHO DIED IN DETENTION IN AUGUST (PRETORIA 5791).

3. COMMENT: TIMING OF RELEASE IS PRESUMABLY RELATED TO KRUGER PLEDGE TO RELEASE DETAINEES IF RELATIVE QUIET CONTINUED IN TRANSVAAL TOWNSHIPS (PRETORIA 5500). THERE HAS ALSO BEEN INCREASING PUBLIC OUTCRY RELATING TO DEATHS IN DETENTION AND RECENT SENSATIONAL EARLY MORNING PICK UP OF PERCY QOBOZA (PRETORIA 5705 AND 5721 (NOTAL)). SAG MAY HAVE FELT RELEASE AT THIS TIME WOULD HELP DIFFUSE PUBLIC CRITICISM WHICH IS EMANATING EVEN FROM AFRIKAANS PRESS, PARTICULARLY ON QOBOZA AFFAIR. WHATEVER SPURRED MOVE, RELEASE IS MINIMAL IN COMPARISON TO TOTAL DETAINED, ESTIMATED BY SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS TO AMOUNT TO 433 PEOPLE. FURTHERMORE, ALTHOUGH MOVE HAS GENERALLY BEEN WELCOMED, FEAR EXISTS THAT MANY OF DETAINEES WILL BE SUBJECTED TO BANNING ORDERS AFTER RELEASE, WHICH IS CASE WITH STEVE BIKO AND IS REPORTED BY PRESS TO HAVE ALREADY OCCURRED WITH ONE OTHER RELEASED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DETAINEE.
BOWDLER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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